

Monday, March 19th, 2007

Green Eyeshade Blog: As most of you know, I am a Certified Public Accountant. As you may also know, the "traditional" headwear of accountants is the "green eyeshade" which was actually worn by practitioners in the field during the late 19th century and early 20th century. The green color was believed to reduce stress on the eyes from hours of pouring over tiny numbers on big paper ledgers.

So, it seemed entirely appropriate that my first foray into the "blogosphere" should be called the "green eyeshade blog." This blog is intended to keep the public informed of the goings on in Washington relative to fiscal matters. We have and will expose those things which CBS news doesn't cover (which is almost everything) that are having a positive or negative affect on taxes and spending in the nation's capital. Many of these items will be brought to you with this regular e-mail.

But if you want more depth and frequent insight into Congress' fiscal behavior, check out the green eyeshade blog at www.greeneyeshadeblog.com.

Oh, and I actually do have a green eyeshade which I have worn from time to time for dramatic effect. Although, I haven't put it on since someone said I looked like a blackjack dealer.

Quotes of the Week: At the press conference launching the American Taxpayer's Bill of Rights last week, two of my colleagues had some fine comments:

Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin: "We must place constraints on Congress, so Americans have more freedom."

Rep. Mike Pence of Indiana (who has a blog on his website): "We need a 'phased withdrawal' from the tax code."

War Supplemental Spending: Washington will be dominated this week by two issues. The Democratic majority in the House is scheduled to unveil their budget proposal for fiscal year 2008. And the "emergency" supplemental war spending bill is scheduled to be heard on the floor. (It passed committee on Thursday by a vote of 37-27). You may remember that this bill started as the President's \$104 billion request to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through the end of the year.

The bill passed by the committee, however, has had two significant additions. First, it contains language that calls for the partial withdrawal of our troops from Iraq by the middle of next year. And secondly, it contains \$21 billion in totally extraneous and largely wasteful additional spending intended to lure votes from members who would not otherwise vote for this turkey....ah...I mean bill.

Anyway, the troop withdrawal and funding cutoff is so obviously horrible military strategy (telling the enemy exactly when you give up) and shows total lack of support for the troops (leaving them without financial or emotional support) that I won't even dwell on that. And by the way, the reports from the ground in Iraq are that the new strategy is showing very positive signs particularly in the Anbar Province.

But even if that were fixed, I wouldn't vote for this thing for fiscal reasons. The new \$21 billion added pork is awful. To add insult to injury, they have added completely extraneous policy items like raising the minimum wage to what is supposed to be an "emergency" military bill. How does that help the war effort? Anyway, here is some of that new spending unrelated to the war that the Democrats added:

- \$74 million for a peanut storage program that pays storage fees as farmers market their crop.
- \$448 million to cover shortfalls in the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- \$400 million to subsidize rural northwest counties who have been suffering from declining timber sales since the mid-1990s.
- \$3.7 billion to compensate farmers and ranchers for losses suffered during the last 3 crop years.
- \$25 million for spinach growers affected by the e-coli health advisory.
- \$60 million for Indian tribes and fisherman affected by declining salmon runs in the Northwest.
- \$50 million for asbestos abatement at the Capitol Hill Power Plant.
- \$140 million for livestock owners, citrus growers affected by the '05 hurricanes.

- \$120 million for the shrimp and menhaden industries.
- \$2.5 billion for homeland security projects such as additional cargo screening at ports and airports.
- \$283 million for extending the small dairy farm income loss contract program.
- \$1.3 billion more for the Army Corps of Engineers to work on the New Orleans levees.
- \$910 million to waive local matching requirements for the FEMA disaster aid program.
- \$1 billion for pandemic flu preparedness.
- \$16 million for maintenance and security improvements to the Capitol Hill office buildings.

- \$25 million for the Small Business Administration disaster-loan program.

Yes, it's a Christmas tree of liberal waste and social engineering.

Until next week, I remain respectfully

Congressman John Campbell